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## Manuals of Faith and Duty.

EDITED BY REV. J. S. CANTWELL, D.D.

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**A T O N E M E N T.**

BY

REV. WILLIAM TUCKER, D.D.

WE ALSO JOY IN GOD THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, BY WHOM  
WE HAVE NOW RECEIVED THE ATONEMENT.

ROMANS v. 11.

BOSTON:

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**Look on me!**

As I shall be uplifted on a cross  
In darkness of eclipse, and anguish dread!  
So shall I lift up in my pierced hands —  
Not into dark, but light; not unto death,  
But life — beyond the reach of guilt and grief,  
The whole Creation.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING  
*Drama of Exile.*

The cross of Christ! There centre our hopes, there die our  
fears, there fall our sins, there gushes our penitence, there beams  
the light of blessed assurance upon our tears.

Rev. E. H. CHAPIN, D.D.

# A T O N E M E N T.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE revealed purpose of the advent, life, teaching, death, and resurrection of Christ was the salvation of man. "His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." This is the divine mission for which Christ was sent into the world. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But what is the divine method of saving the world by Christ? Was the salvation of the human race to be purely an intellectual process, requiring only a divine teacher of the truth? Is the production of this great mental, moral, and spiritual change a function of the reason only, when it has been taught by Christ; or was the process of man's salvation to be ethical as well as rational, demanding a perfect moral law, illustrated by the

perfect example of a sinless life? It is evidently true that man's salvation embraces rational and ethical changes such as perfect teaching, a perfect rule of conduct, and a perfect example would cause. But does not salvation from sin mean more than this? Does belief of the truth and obedience to law embrace all that is implied in the salvation of the human soul? Has man no faculties but intellect, conscience, and will? Is not man a religious as well as an ethical being? Is not piety as well as virtue a rational and natural part of his life? Is man's emotional nature of no practical importance in the work of salvation? Must not the heart be touched, the conscience awakened, love enkindled, and man's religious sensibilities quickened before he can be saved? Will intellectual and ethical instruction alone do this? If it will, then the atonement really has no part in the economy of salvation by Christ. The teacher and law-giver are able to save the world from sin by a system of moral instruction, and a process of ethical culture without the atonement.

But all human experience and all human history prove that intellectual and ethical culture alone have never saved men from sin either as

individuals or as social groups ; hence a spiritual revelation through atonement is necessary.

### I. — THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF ATONEMENT.

The history of this doctrine is an important part of the history of the growth of Christian theology. The evolution of thought on this subject is but the result of the effort of the human mind to give a rational explanation, or account, of the phenomena presented in a large part of the life of Christ. The theological doctrine of the atonement is man's interpretation of the fact of atonement as stated in the Scriptures. This accounts for the fact that this doctrine, in its historical development, has been marked by many changes. During the first two centuries the Christian theologian was led to investigate the doctrine of the work of Christ, either by the attacks of heretics or the defective statements of professed believers. There were two views of the atonement regarded as heretical during the first two centuries, which, inasmuch as they presented partial views of the work of Christ, influenced what is held to be the orthodox state-

ment of it.<sup>1</sup> These were the Gnostic and the Ebionite. Gnosticism appeared in two forms, and broached two theories respecting the person and work of Christ.

That of Basilides (A. D. 125) affirmed only a human suffering in the Redeemer, which was not expiatory for two reasons: "First, because as merely human it was finite and inadequate to atone for the sins of all men; and secondly, because the idea of substitutional penal suffering is inadmissible. Penal suffering, or suffering for purposes of justice, Basilides maintained, of necessity implied personal criminality in the sufferer, and therefore can never be endured by an innocent person like Christ. The principle of vicarious pain, in reference to justice, for this reason is untenable."<sup>2</sup> The Gnosticism of Marcion (A. D. 150) affirmed a divine suffering in the Redeemer, "which, however, was only apparent, because the Logos having assumed a docetic or spectral human body, only a seeming suffering could occur. This suffering, like that in the scheme of Basilides, could not, of course, be expiatory."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> History of Christian Doctrine. 2 vols. By William G. T. Shedd, D. D.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine.

The Ebionite "denied any connection between man and God in the person of the Redeemer, other than that which exists in the life of any and every man."<sup>1</sup> Rejecting the doctrine of expiation altogether, he occupied the position of the Jews and advanced Unitarians.

1. *The Apostolic Fathers.*—In the writings of the Apostolic Fathers we obtain the views of the Church on the doctrine of the atonement during the first half of the century after the death of the last inspired apostle (A. D. 100–150). Examining them, we find chiefly the repetition of Scripture phraseology without any labored attempt at doctrinal statement. There is no effort to construct a scientific doctrine of the atonement in the writings of these devout and consecrated disciples of Paul and John; yet the idea of vicarious suffering is distinctly enunciated by them. By "vicarious" we mean that Christ suffered for men, and that they were benefited by his sufferings. Polycarp (A. D. 168), pupil of John, writes in his Epistle to the Philippians: "Christ is our Saviour; for through grace we are righteous, not by works; for our sins he has taken upon himself, has become the

<sup>1</sup> Shedd.



servant of us all through his death for us, our hope and the pledge of our righteousness. Our Lord Jesus Christ suffered himself to be brought even to death for our sins."

Ignatius (A. D. 116), the pupil of John, is less urgent than Polycarp in respect to the point of vicarious suffering. He is more inclined to consider the work of Christ in reference to the sanctification than the justification of the believer. It is a favorite view of his that the death of Christ brings the human soul into communion with him. And yet the vicarious suffering of Christ is recognized by Ignatius. He speaks of Christ as the one who gave himself to God as an offering and a sacrifice for us. "We have peace through the flesh and blood and passion of Jesus Christ."

In Barnabas, the pupil of Paul, we find a clear expression of the atoning agency of the Redeemer: "The Lord endured to deliver his body to death, that we might be sanctified by the remission of sins which is by the shedding of that blood."

Clement of Rome, a disciple of Paul, dwells more generally in his writings of Christ's work than of other parts of the Christian system, and

speaks particularly on his death. For he says: "His blood was given for us, was poured out for our salvation. He gave, by the will of God, his body for our body, his soul for our soul."<sup>1</sup>

2. *Early Patristic Teaching.*—Passing from the Apostolic to the Primitive Fathers, we find some progress in the scientific statement of the doctrine of atonement. One characteristic of the early Patristic teaching which strikes the attention is the important part which the doctrine of Satan plays in it.<sup>2</sup> The death of Christ is often represented as ransoming man from the power and slavery of the devil. The writer who exhibits this view more plainly and fully than any other is Irenæus. He makes this statement: "The Word of God (the Logos), omnipotent and not wanting in essential justice, proceeded with strict justice, even against the Apostasy or kingdom of evil itself, redeeming from it that which was his originally, not by using violence, but by persuasion as it became God, so that neither justice should be infringed upon, nor the original creation of God perish." The doctrine of this passage is, that atonement was a ransom paid to the devil to redeem man from his power.

<sup>1</sup> Dörner, "Person of Christ."

<sup>2</sup> Shedd, vol. ii. p. 212.

While we find this theory of the atonement running through this whole period of the history of Christian doctrine, it was not the only theory held and advocated at the time. The following extract from the "Epistle Ad Diognetum" shows this: "God himself gave up his own Son a ransom for us, the holy for the unholy, the good for the evil, the just for the unjust, the incorruptible for the corruptible, the immortal for the mortal. For what else could cover our sins but his righteousness? In whom was it possible for us, the unholy and the ungodly, to be justified, except the Son of God alone? O sweet exchange! O wonderful operation! O unlooked-for benefit! that the sinfulness of many should be hidden in one, that the righteousness of one should justify many ungodly."

3. *The Alexandrine School.* — Origen, who belonged to the Alexandrine School of Theology, held that the efficacy of Christ's death extended to the entire apostate world, quoting in proof Colossians i. 20: "By him to reconcile all things unto himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." He remarks that Christ is the great high-priest, not only for man but for every rational creature. Origen also taught that

Christ's "redeeming agency still continues in his state of exaltation, and that he is saving the apostate continually until the entire apostate universe is restored."

Origen held that punishment is not judicial, but disciplinary. In his "Homilies upon Ezekiel," he makes the following statement: "If it had not been conducive to the conversion of sinners to employ suffering, never would a compassionate and benevolent God have inflicted punishment on wickedness." In other places he represents reformation as being the object of punishing the sinner. This being so, it cannot be the purpose of the atonement to save man from deserved punishment, for it is one of the divinely appointed means for his salvation. Origen also rejected the doctrine of endless punishment. This opinion is the logical conclusion from the preceding one,—that punishment is not penal, but disciplinary. For an eternal suffering for sin cannot consist with the amendment of the sinner. The death of Christ is therefore a manifestation of God's love for man, and of his purpose to save him. Clement of Alexandria, the teacher of Origen, makes the following representations according to Redepenning: "The

deep corruption of mankind fills God, whose compassion for man is as unlimited as his hatred towards evil, not with anger, for he is never angry, but with the tenderest and most pitiful love. Hence he continually seeks all men whom he loves for their own sakes, and their resemblance to God, as the bird seeks her young who have fallen from the nest. His omnipotence, to which nothing is impossible, knows how to overcome all evil and convert it into good. He threatens and indeed punishes, but yet only to reform and improve. By means of this power at all times here and hereafter noble minds are drawing nearer to God and the truth."

4. *Athanasius and the Greek Fathers.*—Athanasius composed no tract or treatise upon the atonement, and we must consequently deduce his opinions upon this subject from his incidental statements while discussing other topics. He says, incidentally referring to the work of Christ: "Christ as man endured death for us, inasmuch as he offered himself for that purpose to the Father. . . . Christ takes our sufferings upon himself, and presents them to the Father, entreating for us that they be satisfied in him. . . . The death of the incarnate Logos is a ransom

for the sins of men. Laden with guilt the world was condemned of law; but the Logos assumed the condemnation, and suffering in the flesh gave salvation to all." The views of the Greek writers on theology prominent in the Church at the time of Athanasius were mostly in substantial agreement with his opinions on the subject of the atonement as presented in this historical sketch. Minor differences there were, but they were not such as to imperil the safety of the Church by a revolution in its theology.

5. *Augustine and Gregory the Great.* — Augustine (A. D. 430) is a writer whose opinions upon any subject should receive attention. On the subject of the atonement he makes this statement: "All men are separated from God by sin. Hence they can be reconciled to him only through the remission of sin, and this only through the grace of a merciful Saviour, and this grace through the one only victim of the most true and only priest." In another place he says: "Our Lord did not indeed transfer sin into his flesh as if it were the poison of the serpent, but he did transfer death, so that there might be in the likeness of human flesh the punishment of sin with its personal guilt, whereby

both the personal guilt and punishment of sin might be abolished from human flesh."

On the subject of the necessity of the atonement he says: "They are foolish who say that the wisdom of God could not liberate men otherwise than by God's assuming humanity, being born of a woman and suffering at the hands of sinners." This statement shows that in the mind of Augustine the atonement was only necessary in the sense that it was God's choice.

In his writings Gregory lays great stress upon the idea of a sacrifice offered in the death of Christ. He starts from the conception of guilt, and from this derives immediately the necessity of a theanthropic sacrifice. "Guilt," he says, "can only be extinguished by the penal offering to justice. But it would contradict the idea of justice, if for the sin of a rational being like man, the death of an irrational animal should be accepted as sufficient atonement."

6. *Anselm's Theory of Satisfaction.*—In his tract entitled "Cui Deus Homo,"<sup>1</sup> Anselm begins and ends with the idea of the absolute necessity of an atonement in order to the redemption of

<sup>1</sup> Translated in the "Bibliotheca Sacra," October, 1854, and January, 1855.

man. Everything is referred to a metaphysical or necessary ground, and hence we have in this theory the first metaphysique of the Christian doctrine of atonement. The fundamental position of Anselm is, that the atonement of the Son of God is absolutely or metaphysically necessary in order to the remission of sin. Hence in the very beginning of the tract he affirms that a mere reference to the divine benevolence without regard to divine justice cannot satisfy the mind that is seeking a necessary basis in the doctrine of atonement for salvation; for benevolence is inclined to dispense with penal suffering, and of itself does not demand it.

The thought that runs through all Anselm's reasoning is, that the atonement is made for God and not for man. It is to satisfy God and not to reconcile man.

7. *Abelard, Lombard, Aquinas.* — “Abelard begins and ends with the benevolence of God. This is divorced from and not limited by his holiness, and is regarded as endowed with the liberty of indifference. The Deity can pardon upon repentance. There is nothing in the divine nature which necessitates satisfaction for past transgressions, antecedently to the remis-



sion of penalty. Nothing is needed but penitence in order to the remission of sin. The object of the incarnation and death of Christ is to produce sorrow in the human soul. The life and sufferings of the God-man were intended to make a moral impression upon hard and impenitent hearts."

In the theory of Peter Lombard<sup>1</sup> the influence of the death of Christ is spent upon the subjective character of the individual soul; in softening, subduing, and sanctifying. The claims of justice are met to a limited extent by the sufferings of the Redeemer. They delivered man from the temporal and penal consequences of sin, provided baptism be administered and penitence performed.<sup>2</sup>

Hugo Saint Victor (A. D. 1140) speaks often of the Deity as propitiated. "The Son of God," he says, "by becoming a man paid man's debt to the Father, and by dying expiated man's guilt."

Aquinas answers the objection to the atonement grounded on the fact that merit and demerit are personal, and that therefore vicarious satisfaction is impossible, by the doctrine of the

<sup>1</sup> Lombard wrote in 1164.

<sup>2</sup> Shedd, vol. ii. p. 289.

uniomystical existence between the believer and the Redeemer ; founding his view upon the statement of Saint Paul, that believers are members of the body of Christ. Aquinas believed and taught the doctrine of the superabundance in the merits of Christ. He concedes that the suffering of Christ is of greater value than that of man himself, yet claims that the latter enters as an element in providing for the remission of sin.

8. *The Council of Trent.* — The following extracts from the Canons of the Council of Trent enunciate the Roman Catholic soteriology : “ Justification is not the mere remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renovation of inward man through the voluntary reception of grace and gifts of grace, whereby an unjust man becomes just, the enemy a friend, so that he may be an heir according to the hope of eternal life. The only formal cause of justification is the justice of God, — not that by which he himself is just, but that by which he makes us just. And we are said to be justified gratuitously because none of these things which precede justification, whether faith or works, merits the grace itself of justification.”

9. *Hugo Grotius*. — Grotius (A. D. 1645) presented a theory of the atonement, derived from the doctrines and analogies of civil and criminal law, that has had much influence in directing and shaping the thought of the Church on this subject. The soteriology of Grotius is founded upon his idea of law and punishment, and the relation which these sustain to God. "Law," according to Grotius, "is a positive statute of enactment." "It is not," he says, "something inward in God, or in the divine will and nature, but is only the effect of his will." Law, therefore, is a mere product on the part of God, by which he himself is not bound, because it is his own work. As the enactor of a positive state, he has the same power to change or abrogate it which the law-making power among men possesses. The penalty of law is likewise a positive and not a natural and necessary arrangement. For law is not something eternal in God, or in the will itself of God, but is a particular effect or product of his will. That the effects or products of the divine will are mutable, is very certain. A threat to punish is not like a promise to reward. From the promise to reward when accepted by another

there arises a contract which is binding; but the threat to punish only declares that the transgressor deserves penalty. It follows from this reasoning that "God in his administration may pardon the offender directly, or admit a partial equivalent for the penalty. The sufferings and death of the Son of God are an exemplary exhibition of God's hatred of moral evil, and in connection with which it is safe and prudent to remit the penalty."<sup>1</sup> The governmental theory of atonement now so widely adopted by the churches claiming to be evangelical has grown out of, and is a modification of, the teaching of Grotius.

10. *Socinus*. — The theory of Socinus (A. D. 1539–1604) respecting the work of Christ is stated with great directness and clearness. Rejecting as he did all mystery, and reducing Christianity to a few simple principles of natural ethics, it was easy for him to be explicit in his statements and transparent in his style. He rejected the idea of divine justice as held by the Church generally. "There is no such justice in God," says he, "as requires absolutely and inexorably that sin be punished, and such as

<sup>1</sup> Ancient Law. By Henry S. Maine. p. 62.

God himself cannot repudiate. There is indeed a perpetual and constant justice in God; but this is nothing but his moral equity and rectitude, by virtue of which there is no depravity or iniquity in any of his works.”<sup>1</sup>

The first objection of Socinus to the doctrine of satisfaction was that it excluded mercy. If sin is punished, it is not forgiven; and conversely, it is not punished. “The two ideas of satisfaction and remission exclude and expel each other. If God’s justice is satisfied by the infliction of judicial suffering, there is no room for the exercise of his mercy. If God has received a complete equivalent for the punishment due to man, then he does not show any compassion in remitting his sin.” The second objection of Socinus to the Church doctrine of atonement was that substitution was impossible. An innocent person cannot endure penal suffering, cannot be punished, because sin is personal. Penalty is not like pecuniary debt. One person can pay a sum of money for another, because money is impersonal. But one being cannot satisfy justice for another, because punishment is personal. Justice permits no vicariousness and no substi-

<sup>1</sup> Shedd, vol. ii. p. 377.

tution, but requires that the very identical soul that has sinned should suffer. There is no way therefore to deliver the guilty from penalty but by an act of sovereign will. Justice is made by will, whenever the supreme sovereign pleases to do so.

The third objection of Socinus to the doctrine of vicarious atonement was that even were vicarious penalty allowable, Christ did not suffer it. The law threatens eternal death. Every individual transgressor owes an endless punishment to justice. It would be necessary that there should be as many substitutes as sinners, and that each one should suffer an endless penalty. Christ did not do this; his suffering was not, therefore, an equivalent for man's sin.

The positive part of the soteriology of Socinus is found in the position that forgiveness is granted on the grounds of repentance and obedience. There are no legal obstacles in the way of pardon, because God is sovereign and supreme.

11. *Channing Unitarianism.* — Dr. Channing, to whom American Unitarianism owes more than to any other man, believed in the unity of God, and the divine mission and work of Christ. Christ came as the world's Saviour. His mis-

sion was to save man from sin, and his method of doing this was to sacrifice himself for the salvation of man. Channing says, in his sermon on "Love to Christ":<sup>1</sup> "In the New Testament the crucifixion of Jesus is always set forth as the most illustrious portion of his history. The spirit of self-sacrifice, of deliberate self-immolation, of calm, patient endurance of the death of the cross, in the cause of truth, piety, virtue, human happiness, — this particular manifestation of love is always urged upon in the New Testament as the crowning glory of Jesus Christ." This revelation of Christ's love for man and sympathy with man, as seen in his suffering and death, presents us the philosophy of man's salvation by Christ. It is not alone by ethical teaching, by a pure example, but by God's love for man, and Christ's love for men as shown in his great suffering, that men are saved. It is the power of love to awaken and enkindle love that does it. There is no influence so potent to save men as that of love; and love for man is the great revelation made in the suffering and death of Christ.

Dr. James Freeman Clarke says that "Unita-

<sup>1</sup> Channing's Works, vol. ix. p. 191.

rians are fully justified in holding that the New Testament nowhere asserts that the primary and immediate influence of the death of Christ is upon the divine attributes. In every instance Christ is said to reconcile us to God. It is we who were afar off that have been made right by the blood of Christ. It is we who, when we were enemies, were reconciled by the death of his Son.”<sup>1</sup>

Unitarians generally hold what is called the moral theory of the atonement. In the judgment of nearly all Unitarian divines it was designed to influence man, and not to move God. It was not as a satisfaction to divine justice that Christ suffered, but as a manifestation of divine love. It was not to pay the sinner's debt, but to move the sinner's heart, that Christ expired on the cross. He did not die to save man from punishment, but to save him from sin.

12. *Early Universalism*. — John Murray, the founder of the Universalist Church in America, though not the first teacher of Universalism on this continent, was, previous to his conversion to the larger faith and hope of the final salvation of all men, a Calvinistic Methodist. As a Cal-

<sup>1</sup> Orthodoxy: Its Truths and Errors, p. 262.



vinist, he believed that all for whom Christ died would be saved; as a Methodist, he believed that Christ died for all.<sup>1</sup> These two points of doctrine taken together make Universalism. Put into a syllogism, the argument would stand thus: The major premise, All for whom Christ died will be saved; the minor premise, Christ died for all; Conclusion, Therefore all will be saved. The Universalism of John Murray grew out of his faith in the divinity of Christ, and his views of the nature, relations, and extent of the atonement. It is natural that a divine Saviour should be the author of universal salvation, for all God's relations to man are universal. Were Christ only a man, it would not be unreasonable or unnatural for him to fail in the work of salvation; for partial failure is common to men, but God never fails. The divinity of the cause is proof of the certainty and universality of the effect.

John Murray believed that the work of Christ was substitutional. He held that Christ suffered not only for man, but as man's substitute. As he suffered the penalty for all human sin, and paid the debt to divine justice contracted by the fallen human race, justice demands the salvation

<sup>1</sup> Murray's Sermons, vol. iii.

of all men. If this were not so, sin would be punished in man and also in his substitute, and the debt would be collected from both the sinner and his surety. Substitutional atonement provided for all men becomes the ground of universal salvation.

Hosea Ballou, in his work on the Atonement, shows that sin is not infinite, that it does not involve infinite guilt, nor deserve infinite punishment; that as a consequence punishment is not infinite and eternal. Sin, being limited and temporary, does not need an infinite atonement, does not demand a divine, infinite Mediator.<sup>1</sup> As a result of this reasoning, he reaches the conclusion that punishment is not and cannot be eternal,—which is the conclusion of Universalism,—and that Christ was not God,—which is the conclusion of Unitarianism.

Hosea Ballou was, therefore, in his theology and teaching a Unitarian Universalist. He did not believe that the atonement was the cause, but the effect, of God's love for man. Christ was the gift of the Father's love for suffering humanity. He came and suffered to reveal God's love for us. His atonement was not to reconcile God

<sup>1</sup> Ballou on the Atonement, Part I.

to man, but to reconcile man to God. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." Men are pardoned, not because of the suffering of Christ, but because they repent, believe, and reform; they would not do this, however, without the revelation of God's love in Christ. This is the motive to repentance and piety.

Dr. Thomas B. Thayer holds that the atonement of Christ is the divinely appointed means of reconciling man to God.<sup>1</sup> It does this by convincing man of God's love for him. "All things are of God, who reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation." "We love him because he first loved us."

## II. — SCRIPTURAL STATEMENTS OF ATONEMENT AND THE SUFFERING OF CHRIST.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the

<sup>1</sup> Theology of Universalism, p. 125.

iniquity of us all. It pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many." "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death." "Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures." "I lay down my life for the sheep." "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree." "For Christ hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God." "Who gave himself for us." "Who gave himself for our sins." "Who gave himself a ransom for all." "By whose stripes ye were healed."

The inspired writers in these passages clearly teach the fact of the atonement. They, however, present no theory or philosophy of the

atonement; they recognize the suffering of Christ as necessary to man's salvation; they teach that he suffered for us, for our benefit, for our salvation. He died for us, gave himself for us, gave his life for us. This language proves that Christ came not only to teach men, but to suffer for them. By his suffering he has ransomed, redeemed, and saved us.

The great fact that Christ suffered is clearly stated by all his historians. It has never been denied or even questioned by any respectable authority in religious history.

He did not suffer for himself or for his own sins, for he was sinless. He was pure, undefiled, and separate from sinners. Then why did he suffer? Was there no reason for his suffering? Did he suffer without reason and for no purpose? How could such a man, of such a life and character, suffer as he did, under the government of an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-benevolent God, for no reason and for no wise purpose? Is there no rational explanation of this strange moral phenomenon? Not unless the Biblical account is true. If he suffered for man, for his benefit, for his salva-

tion, and as his Saviour, then the phenomenon is explained, the moral problem is solved; the facts are rationally accounted for, — such a life was worthy of the Son of God, and of the divine Father who sent him. It is in harmony with his divine origin, his benevolent nature, his sinless life, and his exalted character. He suffered as part of a divine plan, to carry out a divine purpose, to fulfil divine prophecy, to reveal the Father's love, and to save the human race from sin. This is the mission on which he came; this is the work for which he was sent into the world. "He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." He is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." He who "knew no sin was made a sin offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." It was like the Father to send him on such a mission of love. It was like the Son to come; and the sublime act of benevolence fits into the moral and spiritual universe of which it is a part, restoring its lost harmony and establishing universal peace.

### III. — UNIVERSAL SACRIFICE AND THE LAW OF VICARIOUSNESS.

The study of Comparative Theology shows there are certain elements common to nearly all religions. These are faith in God's existence and man's relations to him; man's responsibility to God growing out of these relations; a law of duty which is the measure of man's responsibility; the consciousness of sin, guilt, and remorse, as resulting from the violation of this law; and the hope for pardon and salvation through suffering and sacrifice. These common and abiding religious elements we find everywhere.<sup>1</sup> They are primary principles in all theologies, and vital and practical elements in all religions. Does not the existence of these universal elements common to all religions prove that the law of atonement is a fact in the moral government of God, recognized by the moral nature of man? Do they not show that the moral and religious intuitions of man demand atonement as the condition of reconciliation and forgiveness? They teach that while atonement is not necessary to move God,

<sup>1</sup> Manual of the Science of Religion, pp. 142-147.

it is necessary to convince man of God's willingness to be reconciled to man as a sinner. Man has this singular instinct: he demands an earnest of the intentions of God.

All the other elements common to nearly all religions and found in man's religious history and development, are regarded as true; why should we not so regard the common offering of religious sacrifices? Do they not reveal a great want of man's nature, and come under a great law of man's religious being? Have the bleeding victims, the slain animals, the smoking altars, and the costly oblations which we find in nearly all religions no meaning? Is there not in human nature some moral cause for these phenomena? Have these facts in man's religious life and history no reference to his sin and salvation? The general consensus of theological and religious thought interprets these phenomena as the manifestation of man's consciousness of sin, fear of punishment, faith in salvation, and hope for reconciliation through atonement.

It has not been questioned by any standard authority in Comparative Theology that such is, or may be in part at least, the meaning of



sacrificial offerings so common to the many different systems of religion in the world. This view is confirmed by the readiness with which the devotees of such religions embrace Christianity. It comes to them as a system that completes and makes perfect their hope of salvation through sacrifice.

There is in the atonement that which adjusts it to man's religious nature and history. It supplies his wants, and meets his spiritual necessities. It does not set aside the old religious faith and order of the world so much as it transcends them. Its mission is not to destroy, but to make perfect.

"Vicarious<sup>1</sup> sacrifice is the law of being. It is a mysterious and fearful thing to observe how God's universe is built upon this law, — how it permeates and pervades all Nature, so that if it were to cease Nature would cease to exist." It conditions the existence and development of all life, mind, and character. The existence of the individual, the family, society, and the race is the result of its action. Civili-

<sup>1</sup> The author uses the term "vicarious" in the sense of suffering *for* another and *for* his benefit, — not in the place of, or instead of, the other.

zation, the Church, and the State are ours because of its operation.

The rocks must crumble and be converted into soil, that plants may live, grow, and bear fruit. Plants must die, that animals and men may have life and enjoyment. Animals suffer and die for each other and for the benefit of man. Men everywhere suffer to help and bless their fellow-men. The father suffers for his family, and the mother suffers for her children. The patriot dies for his country, and the Christian martyr for the truth and the Church. We live under a republican form of government and enjoy civil and religious liberty because our Revolutionary fathers suffered and died in battle and in camp.

Christ, the Son of God and the Son of man, suffered for us under this great law of God's moral and spiritual providence. The death of Christ for man's salvation is the highest application of this law known to the moral universe. This event in its principle is not exceptional, but universal. It is a part of a divine plan upon which human society was organized. It is operative everywhere in domestic, social, and religious life. It gives play to man's sym-

pathies, and provides for the exercise of his benevolence. It is not only the law of humanity, but of divinity as well. It embraces in its sublime sweep the finite and the infinite, man and God, earth and heaven, time and eternity. It is the law of divine action in creation, providence, and grace. God is all the time planning and working for others, and not for himself. The whole material universe is used in the service of man. Nature is a divine instrument of human service. God is all the time giving to his children. He gives them food and raiment, home and friends, health and happiness, joy and peace, faith and hope, love and loved ones. For our salvation he has given his Son, his Spirit, and himself to us.

The atonement is the revelation of God's self-sacrificing love. God is an emotional being. He has an emotional nature, and reveals himself as in the exercise of the emotions of justice, benevolence, love, pity, compassion, forgiveness, and sympathy. These terms mean the same when applied to God as when applied to man. Man was made in the image and likeness of God's intellectual, moral, and spiritual nature. It is for this reason that we can under-

stand God's thoughts and feelings as he reveals himself in Nature, the Bible, and Christ. We interpret all things in the light of our own conscious being, life, and experience; and by this interpretation we see God giving the strongest proof of his love for us which it is possible for even God to give.

The power to suffer voluntarily for the benefit of others reveals the possession of a great nature. It shows great moral and spiritual sensibility. It manifests large benevolence and great sympathy. It indicates a generous and noble spirit, and great strength of moral character. The really great men and women of history have all possessed this power in a marked degree. Its possession gives to the human soul great influence with men. It is moral power as distinguished from physical force. The possession of this power as no other man ever possessed it is the supreme glory of the character and life of Christ. It is also one of God's infinite perfections. It is this that gives him moral omnipotence. It is only in its exercise that he can give the strongest proof of his love for man. This he did when he gave his only begotten Son to suffer

and die for the world's salvation. It is the infinite love of God thus revealed that touches the great heart of humanity, awakens its moral life, and kindles its moral enthusiasm into a glow.

#### IV. — THE ATONEMENT AND LAW.

The atonement of Christ is not in conflict with the moral law, or the moral order of society. They both had their origin in the same divine mind. The unity of the divine nature and character is proof of the harmony between law and atonement. They are divine moral effects of the same divine moral cause, and cannot be in conflict. They must be in agreement; otherwise there is no unity in the divine nature and no harmony in the divine government.

Christ recognizes the divine origin and authority of the law while engaged in the great work of making atonement. He states the supreme principle of the law as love, and shows that the atonement had its origin in, and embodies the same principle. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,

but have everlasting life." We are also taught that the influence of atonement as a revelation of the love of God for man secures obedience to the law of love. "We love him because he first loved us." The law and the atonement are both provisions of divine love to save man from sin.

The life of Christ is one of perfect obedience to the law. It is a living commentary upon its principles and precepts. The requirements of the law are illustrated and enforced by his example. Its spirit is embodied and takes form in his conduct and character. We see in his social life the practical evidence of the wonderful adjustment of the law to man's social relations, and of its perfect adaptation to his nature and wants. In his teaching he gives us not only theory but practice, not only precept but example. He not only tells us what the law requires us to do, but shows us how to do it.

The atonement shows us that God submits to and obeys the same law of love which he has given to us, — that it is the law for divinity as well as humanity, — the law of God as well as the law of man, and controls divine as well as human action. This fact reveals, as no other

fact ever did, the divinity, supremacy, and authority of the law. It shows its permanency and universality. It is the law of God and man, heaven and earth, time and eternity; the law for all worlds, and of all rational, moral, and spiritual beings. It is always, everywhere, and on all rational natures binding. The atonement sustains the law by placing before man the strongest possible motives to obey it; all moral action is conditioned by motives. There can be no rational, responsible action without motives. To act without regard to motives is to act irrationally. A man without motives is a man without a moral nature, and incapable of moral action. Motives influence our conduct by appealing to the affections, emotions, and sensibilities of our rational, moral, and religious natures. The strongest motives are those which appeal to conscience, love, and hope; and the atonement makes its appeal to all these, as no other fact in all human history ever did.

In the advent, life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ for man's salvation, the divine goodness appeals to man's gratitude, the divine purity to man's conscience, the divine

love to man's heart, the divine faithfulness to man's confidence and trust, the divine promises to man's hope, and the divine nature and character to man's adoration and worship. Was there ever stronger motive presented to man to secure his obedience to law? Was there ever stronger appeal made to man's whole moral and religious nature, to bring him into harmony with right, and unto union with God, than is made in the atonement?

V. — THE ATONEMENT AND PUNISHMENT.

In the philosophy and theology of Universalism the function of punishment is disciplinary and reformatory. Its work is to teach and reform; its design is to educate and save. Men are punished for their own good, and not alone for the good of society. As a part of the moral government of God, it had its origin in love. Its function is benevolent; its object is to make men better. This being so, the design of the atonement was not to prevent punishment. To do that is to injure, and not to help man. If punishment is designed and adapted to reform men, to prevent it by the atonement is to prevent their reformation.



The purpose of the atonement is not to save man from punishment, but to save him from sin. It saves from punishment only to the extent of and by saving from sin. The atonement and punishment are not opposed the one to the other, but they are both opposed to sin. They are both designed to prevent sin, and to save men from it. Punishment and atonement are both designed to maintain and not to disturb the moral order of the universe. They do not abrogate, but enforce and uphold law. Punishment and atonement are not ends of government; they are only the means employed by government for the attainment of high and noble ends.

From these views it follows that Christ, in making atonement, did not suffer man's punishment. He suffered for man and for his benefit; but he did not suffer man's punishment, nor to save man from just punishment. All punishment is suffering, but all suffering is not punishment. To make suffering punishment there must be in it a moral element; it must be attended by the moral consciousness that it is deserved. Christ's suffering for man was attended by no such moral consciousness; there-

fore it was not, and could not be punishment. It was suffering voluntarily endured for man's benefit, but it was in no sense his punishment.

Moral character and moral action are purely personal, and therefore cannot be transferred. Christ did not suffer man's punishment, because he was not guilty of man's sin. He had not violated the law, nor incurred the penalty; consequently he could not suffer the punishment due man's sin. The sin of man cannot be transferred to, nor his punishment inflicted on, Christ. Man's moral responsibility and moral obligation cannot be assumed by another; morals recognize no substitution. The person that sins incurs the penalty, and must suffer the punishment. Christ suffered on account of sin and for sin, but he was not punished as a sinner. The penalty of sin is the consciousness of guilt, a feeling of moral condemnation, a sense of shame, and remorse of conscience. The innocent and sinless Son of God could not possibly suffer such a penalty. He could not by any power in earth or heaven be made to have such a moral experience. Such a psychological condition would be impossible to his nature and character. It is therefore evident that the

suffering endured by Christ was not the punishment of man's sin. It was not the penalty of violated law which man had incurred, nor the suffering which man's outraged moral nature inflicts upon the sinner.

Punishment prepares the way for Christ and his salvation. It does this by making man understand his true condition as a sinner. It shows him how fearful an evil sin is. It reveals its power, pollution, slavery, degradation, shame, and remorse. It is the hungry man that will seek for food. The thirsty man will cry for water, the diseased man will go to the physician; and the soul, conscious of pain, shame, remorse, and hell that sin causes, will seek Christ and his great salvation. To all such Christ, with his great atonement, stands ready to forgive and save. The desire of the truly penitent spirit is to be saved from sin and not penalty.

#### VI. — THE ATONEMENT OF DIVINE ORIGIN.

The atonement is of divine origin. It is a divine arrangement for the salvation of man, — a form of divine activity in love and mercy. It was a part of God's gracious purpose towards

man from the foundation of the world. It was provided for in the divine plan of moral government before man was created. It was not an afterthought to which God was prompted by the origin of sin. It was not hurriedly provided to meet the moral crises which sin had caused in God's moral universe. Man's sin was foreseen, and his salvation provided for in the divine plan before the sons of God sang their anthem of praise at the dawn of creation.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will; to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved: in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."<sup>1</sup>

The Apostle teaches us in this sublime passage from the Epistle to the Ephesians that God

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians i. 3-7.

purposed to save man from sin through the atonement of Christ from before the foundation of the world. This divine purpose originated in God's infinite love. Creation and salvation in the divine mind do not form two purposes, but one purpose. God's purpose of salvation did not grow out of man's creation and fall into sin; but he created man that he might save him. The divine purpose to create is grounded in the divine purpose to save, or rather it is a part of it. God is one; his nature is a unit. He could form no purpose to exercise his natural attributes in creation that would conflict with his moral nature. God is a being of infinite holiness, justice, and benevolence; foreseeing, before man was created, that in the event of his creation he would certainly sin, God could not purpose to create man unless he also purposed to save him. To have done so would have been contrary to his moral perfections and moral character. This the divine unity made impossible. In the nature and order of creation, as regards value and importance, the moral takes precedence of the natural. It is in harmony with this law of the moral universe that God should purpose to save man before he purposed to create him.

In nature the material exists for the spiritual, the animal for the rational, and the natural for the moral. Creation is a condition and means of salvation; it is a preparation for it. Its moral importance grows out of this fact. This gives to matter and life a moral function. The physical universe has moral relations; the operations of Nature look to moral ends. There is a law of moral unity in the universe that binds together all forces and all events. All previous civilization was but a preparation for the advent of Christ as the Saviour of the world. It is this event that gives unity to all history. This world becomes the theatre for the unfolding of God's great purpose of salvation through atonement. The method of this unfolding has been gradual and progressive, the causes of it have been divine and human action, and all human history is the record of the results. By this process institutions have been builded, governments established, laws enacted, arts created, and reforms inaugurated. Christian civilization is its product, the Christian Church the divinely constituted agent, and the gospel of Christ the great moral and spiritual instrument. Christ was sent by God into the world

on a mission of salvation. "He came to seek and to save the lost." "He was sent unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "He came not into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." These texts show that Christ is the Saviour by divine appointment; this was his divine mission into the world.

"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep we should live together with him." "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

God has appointed us to obtain salvation by Christ. The atonement is then a matter of divine appointment. Jesus Christ tasted death for every man by the grace of God. It was an arrangement of special divine favor to man. Christ "gave himself for our sins, that he might

deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.”<sup>1</sup>

The atonement of Christ for man’s sin is here stated to be according to the will of God. The Father sent his Son on this mission of suffering love for man’s salvation.

“Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”<sup>2</sup> “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation in his blood through faith.”<sup>3</sup> Christ was set forth by God for this very work of making atonement for sin through faith in his blood.

The one great fact in the life of Christ in which we find the atonement is his suffering; he suffered for us. He suffered for our sin, though he did not suffer its penalty and punishment; he suffered to save us from sin, to reconcile us to God. His suffering is the means of our salvation.

#### VII. — THE NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT.

The suffering of Christ in the agony of the garden was not the direct infliction of divine wrath upon the soul of Jesus as the substitute

<sup>1</sup> Galatians i. 4.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John iv. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Romans iii. 25.



for sinful men. The difficulties in the way of this theory are insuperable. There was never a moment in which the holy Son of God endured the wrath of the divine Father. It is a fearful thing to give place for a moment to this sad misapprehension or misrepresentation of the Gospel. Could the obedient Son of God incur the anger of his Father while executing the Father's will? Can God punish his own Son for doing that which he commanded him to do? Can God bless and curse the same being in the same instant for doing one and the same act? Surely these things cannot be. The justice and benevolence of God, and the character and work of Christ make such a theory impossible to rational thought. God never felt for Christ any other emotion than love. Nor was this agony caused by the indirect malediction of God, who by withdrawing himself from his Son left him to bear the curse that was due the sinful race. No; God did not actively or constructively visit his wrath upon the soul of Jesus. The cause, whatever it was, lay outside of the divine agency, and was a force as hostile to the will of the Father as it was repugnant to the pure and sensitive soul of Jesus.

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1. *Not Penalty.*—In the agony of the garden and the cross Christ did not bear all the penalty of all the sins of all men for all the ages, combined and compressed into the experience of an hour. If this theory were true, there would be no saving of suffering to the moral and spiritual universe by the atonement of Christ. There would be the same amount of suffering; it would only be transferred from the guilty to the innocent. How such an act of the divine administration could reveal the infinite love, justice, and mercy of God we cannot see.

2. *Not the Payment of a Debt.*—Nor was the death of Jesus the payment of a debt to divine justice, in order that God might be just, and at the same time justify those who believe. The atonement viewed in this way compels us to do violence to our reason, or accept of one or two inevitable consequences. If the debt incurred by the accumulated sins of men is paid, then the divine justice cannot enforce the penalty of the violated law upon the sinner who has release from the penalty written in the blood of the Son of God. If the divine justice still exacts from the sinner the penalty of vio-

lated law, then this penalty will be twice paid,—once by the guilty sinner and once by the innocent Christ. This double infliction of penalty is at variance with all principles of justice, human or divine. We never regard it as just, or excuse it in practical life. On the other hand, the absolute payment of the debt of sin by Jesus Christ releases every soul of man from all liability of punishment—either for past, present, or future sin; for the whole burden of human guilt has been borne by Christ, and the awful account has been finally and fully settled. This being so, all punishment inflicted on any human being for sin is now unjust.

3. *Not Substitutionary.* — The doctrine of atonement by substitution labors under every difficulty that attends the one already examined. The substitute being accepted, the principal is released by all terms of justice, right, and reason. But this theory does not stop at this point. If man deserved eternal death, as the advocates of this theory hold, it is impossible to see how this penalty can be modified by enforcing it upon the person of the substitute. Although the soul of Christ was of infinite value and of infinite merit, it was still a human soul,

and in the office of substitute for a sinner doomed to eternal death, must suffer the penalty, or else atonement does not meet the claims of justice. To modify the penalty and shorten the duration of it is to change the law, and thus impugn the divine government in the very sphere in which we profess to justify it. The union of the divine and human natures in Christ does not remove the difficulty. It was the humanity which made the atonement, as the advocates of substitution claim. We must abandon the doctrine of eternal penalty or give up the theory of atonement by substitution.

4. *How and why Christ Suffers.* — Christ suffered for sin and from sin because, as the saviour of men, he came into conflict with it. We can only forgive the sin from which we suffer. A sin that has never touched us in any way we cannot forgive. We must have a knowledge that the sin we would forgive has harmed us; we must have felt the wrong it was to us, and have suffered from its evil and its sting before we forgive it, or try to save men from it. We never try to save men from evils or sins to which we are indifferent, — that have never touched us painfully, — of the wrong and evil

of which we were never conscious, and never had an experience. Our forgiveness of sins in others, and their salvation from sin through our efforts, originates in our suffering from them. Until we have this consciousness and experience, we do not know them as sins against us which we can forgive, and from which we can and should try to save them. All forgiveness and salvation, then, come of, and come through, suffering. This is a necessity of our intellectual and moral nature, and it is as true of the nature of Christ as it is of ours. It is as true of the divine as of the human nature, of the nature of God as of the nature of man. Neither God nor man would or could, from the laws of mental and moral action common to both, save man from sin if they did not know or feel sin as evil. Without this consciousness of the evil of sin, there would be no motive to save man from it. All moral beings, whether divine or human, act from motives. Love, sympathy, compassion, pity, and benevolence — the motives which move God and men to forgive and save — become active only when the evil and the wrong of sin are known and felt. Christ became the saviour of men when the guilt, remorse, degra-

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dation, shame, and pain of sin became so real to him as to shock and appall his sensitive moral and spiritual nature. The suffering for sin is therefore inseparable from the work necessary to man's salvation.

Christ suffered for us, and we are blessed and saved through his suffering, because of the oneness of humanity. Human nature is a unit. The human family is social and organic; it is one and many. The bond of union is moral and vital. There is a common law, and a common life. We are united in the possession of a common nature, instincts, sympathies, affections, needs, wants, joys, and sorrows. There are domestic, family, social, and business ties that bind us together; a unity of nature, of thought, of interest, and of life that make us one. Christ was born of, was born into, and is a part of our humanity. He is vitally, socially, and morally a part of our human nature; is a member of human society, and a personal character in history. As such he is one with us and one of us. His life touches ours as intellectual, moral, social, and religious beings. He acts upon us through our intellects, conscience, affections, and sympathies. He is in

sympathy with us; he shares our joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains; he is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. He is the spiritual vine; we are the branches. We are vitally connected with him; we are members of his spiritual body, having his spiritual nature and sharing his spiritual life. He is united to us, dwells in us, and rules over us. Our life is hid with Christ in God. "The life we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God."

5. *The Atonement and Justice.* — In many theories of atonement the common and prominent element is justice. This is especially so in the theories advocated by the churches which claim to be orthodox. In each one of these three theories there is one common element. "This element is that the necessity of the death of Christ lay in the divine attribute of justice. According to the first theory, Christ died to satisfy what was due by God to the devil; according to the second, he died to satisfy what was due by God to himself; according to the third, he died to satisfy what was due by God to the moral universe.

"Divine justice in the first theory owed a

ransom to the devil, which Christ paid; in the second it owed a debt to the divine honor, which Christ paid; in the third it owed protection to the universe from the danger of evil example. The difficulty to be removed before God can forgive sin lay, according to all these theories, in the divine justice. Christ died to reconcile justice and mercy, so as to make justice merciful, and mercy just.”<sup>1</sup> These theories all destroy the unity of the divine nature and government. They array one divine attribute against another. Mercy is in conflict with justice, and justice is at war with mercy. This causes a schism in the divine being.

God is one. His nature, being, and attributes are a unit; he is one being, one life, and one character. There is no war between the divine attributes, and no schism in the divine nature. In the divine nature and in the divine government justice and mercy are not in conflict, but in agreement. In their practical revelation and relation to man they are but the two forms in which God’s infinite love becomes operative and manifests itself. Justice,

<sup>1</sup> Orthodoxy: Its Truths and Errors. By James Freeman Clarke. p. 261.



as revealed in law, penalty, and punishment, forbids sin, would prevent sin and reform sinners. Mercy, as operative in the atonement, would prevent sin, and save man from sin, but not from punishment. They are in different ways doing the same work, and aiming at the same result,—that is, the salvation of man from sin. The practical function of both justice and mercy, as forms of active, divine benevolence, is to secure man's highest moral and spiritual well-being by saving him from sin, and saving him from punishment by saving him from sin, and because it does so. These two attributes in the divine nature and these two forces in the divine government are a moral unit. They work together for man's salvation; and the result is the end of sin in the moral universe of God.

The atonement is the revelation to man of the love of God. God's love for man is not the effect, but the cause of the atonement. Christ came and suffered for us, not to cause God to love us, but because he does love us. He was the gift of the Father's love for the world's salvation. The atonement is the way in which God's love for man manifests itself. It is the

medium of divine revelation, the expression of the infinite love of God for man, when overshadowed by his great sin and deep sorrow. It is the evidence by which every human soul should be convinced of God's love. "God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." <sup>1</sup>

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." <sup>2</sup> "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." <sup>3</sup> The love of God for man finds therefore its full revelation in the atonement of Jesus Christ.

The strongest proof that God or man can give of divine or human love is willingness to suffer for the persons loved. The atonement reveals the Father and Son in self-sacrifice. For man's salvation the Father gives his only begotten Son to suffer and die, and the Son gives his own life. Was it possible for God or man to give

<sup>1</sup> Romans v. 8.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John iv. 9, 10.

<sup>3</sup> John iii. 16.

a more convincing proof of love for suffering humanity?

The atonement stands out in the world's history as the most transcendent manifestation of love ever made by God to men or angels.

6. *The Atonement is Reconciliation.* — The design of the atonement was not to reconcile God to man, but to reconcile man to God. The infinite Father, whose nature is love, has always been ready to be reconciled to man. His love for man has ever caused him to desire his salvation; and in the exercise of this great love for men he sends Christ into the world on a mission of reconciliation. On this subject the Apostle Paul writes to the Church at Corinth: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation: to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."<sup>1</sup> And again he says:

<sup>1</sup> 2 Corinthians v. 18-20.

"For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."<sup>1</sup> Justification, as well as reconciliation, of which it is a part, comes to us through the mediation and atonement of Christ. "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>2</sup>

"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven."<sup>3</sup> The atonement as a revelation of divine love overcomes human hate, and reconciles man to God. It is the goodness of God that leadeth man to repentance. "We love God because he first loved us."<sup>4</sup>

The love of God for man as revealed in the gift of his Son for the salvation of the race, makes a powerful appeal to the human heart, and becomes a great controlling motive to repentance and reformation. Goodness, by a law of man's spiritual being, awakens gratitude and

<sup>1</sup> Romans v. 10.

<sup>3</sup> Colossians i. 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. 1.

<sup>4</sup> 1 John iv. 19.

love; by a law of the moral sentiments it enkindles love. These two laws that control the action of the moral and religious emotions give to the love of God as revealed in the suffering of Christ for man's salvation a powerful influence on human thought and feelings, life and character.

But the atonement not only reconciles man to God, but it also reconciles man to his brother-man. "If a man says I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also."<sup>1</sup>

Sin, which has its root in selfishness, has separated men from God and from each other. The love of God as revealed in the atonement of Christ overcomes human selfishness and destroys human sin. The higher love must carry with it the lower, so we cannot love the divine Father without loving our human brother.

"In Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."<sup>2</sup> The moral distance between God and man and

<sup>1</sup> 1 John iv. 20, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians ii. 13.

between man and his fellow-men is shortened by the atonement, which is a manifestation of God's love for all men. This shows how near God is to man in his love and sympathy, which naturally causes man to feel nearer and to come nearer to God. Nearness to God is a moral and not a physical condition, and depends not upon where he is so much as upon what he is. It results not from change of place, but from change of character.

"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth," says Christ, "will draw all men unto me."<sup>1</sup> He thus becomes the moral magnet of the universe, drawing all souls to himself, by the spiritual magnetism of his love. In Christ the law of moral gravitation that binds man to God and to his fellow-men is re-established, and the lost harmony of the spiritual universe is restored. Infinite love becomes supreme, and it kindles all hearts into a glow.

"Having made known the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he has purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> John xii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Ephesians i. 9, 10.

It is the purpose of God in Christ to restore the lost unity and harmony of the moral universe by the destruction of sin, the cause of all discord. When the love of God fills all hearts, controls all wills, and governs all conduct, selfishness will die, and there will be no more sin.

#### VIII. — THE ATONEMENT AND THE UNIVERSE.

The unity of nature is proof of the unity of God. The unity of God demands a law of moral unity in all creation. The oneness of the cause proves unity in the effect. The creator of the universe being one, there must be a law of moral unity running through the creation. The supreme law of divine action is moral. It is all-embracing, all-controlling, all-pervading. In all God does there is a moral purpose and a moral end. The physical universe has moral and spiritual functions. It sustains moral relations, and takes its place in the evolution of a great moral purpose. It is one in the chain of causes and influences that bind God and man together. It is the local habitation of man, — a moral being with a moral nature, endowed with moral faculties, sustaining moral relations, conscious of moral

responsibility, under moral obligation, and in subjection to moral government. The material universe is the home of a race of moral beings. Its forces are builded and organized into moral persons in union with spirits born of God. It furnishes the physical conditions of moral life, moral action, moral culture, moral character, and moral history. It exists in space for moral ends. Within its limits the family is organized, the home is builded, children are born, society has its origin, moral life is developed; love, benevolence, and charity live; science, philosophy, religion, and civilization are born. Minds are educated, schools and churches are builded, the gospel is preached, the Bible is written and published, Christianity is established, and souls are saved.

All these facts show the moral importance of the material universe, and connect it directly with the atonement of Christ, the greatest event in moral history. These facts are explained when it is learned, from God's revelation to man, that the universe was created for this purpose. It had its origin in, and its creation is, a part of God's great purpose of salvation through atonement. The final cause and moral reason



for the existence of the universe are to be found in the fact that it was necessary to the moral development and salvation of man. To this end is the mediatorial work of the Son of God in destroying sin, saving man, and establishing a moral empire of holiness, benevolence, truth, justice, and happiness.

On this subject John says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made."<sup>1</sup> "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."<sup>2</sup>

Without entering into the controversy as to who the Word was, it is evident it was some divine wisdom, spirit, or wisdom and spirit made flesh. It took human form and became incarnated in the person, life, and character of Jesus Christ. This identifies the author of atonement with the creator and the creation of all things.

Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, makes this statement: "He [God] hath spoken unto

<sup>1</sup> John i. 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid 14.

us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his [God's] glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."<sup>1</sup> John states that this person was the only begotten of the Father. Paul says he was the Son of God, the medium of divine revelation, the agent of divine creation, and the head of divine mediatorial government. He is heir of all things, upholds all things by the word of his power, purges or takes away the world's sin, and sits down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

Paul also states: "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist."<sup>2</sup> This language is applied to Christ, and as the author of atonement, associates him with the work of creation and provi-

<sup>1</sup> Hebrews i. 2, 3.

<sup>2</sup> Colossians i. 16, 17.

dence. All things were created by him and for him, as the Son of God and saviour of the world.

“And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.”<sup>1</sup> This power is conferred upon Christ as mediator and saviour for the benefit of the church. The moral government of God extends to all worlds and beings; hence Jesus Christ as mediator and saviour must extend his authority and power wherever sin is actual or possible.

The atonement as a divine arrangement for man's salvation from sin must exert its influence in all worlds where rational and moral beings exist, otherwise the statement of the Apostle “that where sin abounds grace does

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians i. 19-22.

much more abound " is not true. The universe is the theatre of redemption, and the influence of atonement is everywhere present. "All the analogies of Nature, and all the conclusions of science tend to prove that other worlds in space are populated by rational and moral beings;" and if so, they need the restoring, inspiring, and saving influence of the atonement. We do not know that sin originated in any other world than this, but we do know that some other world may have been colonized with sinners from this. We know that sinners have gone out of this life and this world in sin, and as they are immortal, must exist somewhere in God's universe; and wherever they are they need and will ultimately have salvation through atonement.

The Apostle says in reference to this matter: "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit, by which he also went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 Peter iii. 18-20.

This passage proves that the possibilities and opportunities for salvation are not all confined to this world and this life; Christ reigns as king and saviour in all other worlds as well as in this.

If it were true that God could not or would not save man anywhere but in this world and this life, who would be saved? It is certain that no one is perfectly saved from sin here; and if this life is the only time when men can be saved, and this world is the only place where they can be saved, and they are not saved here and now, salvation is to the race an impossible experience.

But why should the possibilities of and the opportunities for salvation be limited to this world and this life? Is not the soul as a rational, moral being capable of knowing, believing, loving, obeying, and worshipping God immortal? Is not God infinite, eternal, omnipotent, omnipresent, benevolent, merciful, just, and unchangeable in all his attributes? Does he not occupy all space; fill with his presence, light, and love, all worlds, and live through all time? Why, then, is it possible for God to save a human soul from sin in this life,

and not in some other life,—in this world, and not in some other world? Man being in his rational, moral, and religious nature immortal, why is it possible for him to be saved in this world and not in the next, in time and not in eternity? The Apostle Peter believed that man could be saved at any time and place in life, any world where God lived and loved. Hence we have the fact revealed to us that Christ having suffered for us, the just for the unjust, that he might bring or reconcile us to God, went in his spiritual person to preach his gospel of love and mercy to souls who had departed this life impenitent and unsaved. This is the view of this passage held by Bishop Plumptre, Nitzsch, Dr. Martensen, Dorner, Dr. Julius Müller, and other learned German and English theologians; and it should settle the question of the possibility of salvation after death. It connects the atonement of Christ not only with the salvation of souls in this world, but in all worlds where souls are found that need salvation. It sets aside the limitation men have placed upon the extent of the provisions of the atonement, and as to the time and place of their saving application. It makes the salva-

tion of all men possible and probable, if not certain, it matters not in what world among the countless orbs of space they may have their local habitation. The atonement being a provision of divine government to save man in harmony with moral law and moral order, must be as universal as the government itself. Wherever moral law is supreme, moral government exists, and moral order is established, there the atonement is present as an inspiration to higher moral life and nobler moral action. And wherever moral order is disturbed, moral law violated, penalty disregarded, and authority ignored, there atonement comes as a new revelation of God, a new presentation of truth, a new manifestation of love, bringing new motives to repentance, reformation, and obedience, and new hopes for deliverance from evil, salvation from sin, and reconciliation with God.

#### IX. — THE MEDIATORIAL REIGN OF CHRIST AND THE ATONEMENT.

The inspired writers teach us that the atoning work of the Son of God is inseparably connected with his mediatorial reign. "And what

is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things unto the church; which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”<sup>1</sup>

The mediatorial power of Christ, which places him at the right hand of God, and makes him head over all things unto the Church, is presented as a part of the work of mediation which embraced his advent, death, and resurrection.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

<sup>1</sup> Ephesians i. 19-23.



“Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”<sup>1</sup>

The Apostle here teaches us that the exaltation and universal dominion of Christ, as well as the universal subjection, obedience, and worship of all men, are inseparably connected with, and largely resulted from, his incarnation, humiliation, and death.

“Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”<sup>2</sup>


<sup>1</sup> Philippians ii. 5-11.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians xv. 24-28.

Christ was appointed mediator between God and man that he might conquer evil, subdue sin, destroy death, and establish the universal reign of righteousness, peace, and love.

“And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of saints. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.

“And I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands; saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying,



Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever."<sup>1</sup>

In this sublime passage from inspired revelation, the final salvation of all creatures from sin, and their restoration to the worship and service of God are ascribed to the atoning work of Christ as effected by his suffering and death.

X. — THE SPIRITUAL MISSION OF CHRIST CONSISTENT WITH ATONEMENT.

The relation of Christ to humanity is a spiritual relation. He came on a spiritual mission to teach spiritual truth, to reveal a spiritual law, to establish a spiritual kingdom, and to work out for man a spiritual deliverance. The one fact in the moral history of the race that made the incarnation and advent of Christ necessary was a moral and spiritual fact. Sin is the free act of man as a spiritual being. It is a violation of God's spiritual law, — a law that grows out of man's spiritual relation to God, his Creator and Father.

<sup>1</sup> Revelation v. 8-14.

To save man from sin and consequences of this spiritual act of disobedience, Christ is promised in inspired prophecy. He came to conquer a spiritual foe, to subdue a spiritual rebellion, to free man from spiritual bondage, and to make him morally and spiritually a free son of God. This was the object of the advent of Christ. It was his work and mission according to his own teaching and the teaching of the Apostles. This feature of the mission of Christ the Jews failed to understand; this was caused by their predominant materialism and selfishness; they could not understand either the spirituality or benevolence of Christ. This caused them to look upon the Jewish government and nation, the worship and ceremonial, as a divine end in itself, and not as a means to an end. They did not understand the spiritual and religious function of their own government, and therefore thought that Christ came on a political mission, and to free them from subjection to the Roman Empire. This failure to understand the nature of the mission and work of Christ caused his rejection as the promised Messiah of the prophets.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Liddon's Bampton Lectures, pp. 195, 198, 202, 206.

History teaches us that the power of Christ and the power of the Christian religion result from the essential spirituality of the life, character, and teaching of Christ. He taught the spirituality of God and the spirituality of men as children of God; man's spiritual relation to God as his Father, and his spiritual relation to his fellow-men as brethren; and as growing out of this relation the spiritual duty of love to God and love to man; and as resulting from this nature and relation, the immortality of the soul, and future eternal life. This teaching moved the world, and revolutionized the religion of the Roman Empire.<sup>1</sup>

These grand results of the spiritual mission of Christ are largely due to the atonement. It was from the first and is now a divinely appointed means for the attainment of great spiritual ends. The function of atonement in God's government is not legal, but moral and spiritual. It is not an arrangement to satisfy law, but to save souls. As a revelation of God's love for man, it is the embodiment of wonderful moral and spiritual force. By reconciling man to God it opens the way for spiritual union and communion between God and man.

<sup>1</sup> See Roman History.

“Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”<sup>1</sup> Christ has made peace between man and God by the blood of his cross. The suffering of Christ for man reveals his love for him in a way that powerfully impresses his moral and spiritual nature, and quickens into life all his spiritual faculties. Christian piety is a glad and loyal obedience proceeding from personal love for Christ, which has been awakened by his love for us. This love is the fulfilling of the law, and it casteth out all fear, which hath torment.

#### XI. — THE EXTENT OF THE ATONEMENT.

In connection with this subject, and growing very naturally out of it, is the question, For whom has the atonement been made? Is the provision partial or universal? Are its saving benefits for all men or only for a chosen few? Does it constitute the rational ground for a universal or a partial salvation? As a result of its provision and application, will all men be saved or only a part? These questions are of vital importance. In this connection they are practical questions; for they involve our duties,

<sup>1</sup> Romans v. 1.

responsibilities, and hopes. If the atonement is universal, then the possible, if not the certain, salvation of all is assured. This places the responsibility of salvation on man himself, and this is where it should be placed. Every man should feel that whatever may be the divine purpose in regard to the final destiny of the race, under the atonement the question of salvation is a personal and a practical one, a question that is to be largely determined by himself. Man should feel that in salvation he has not only a personal interest, but in regard to it personal responsibility, obligation, and duty. It is in a very important sense his work. He should know and feel this. As a truth it should take hold on his intellect, emotions, and will. As the atonement is a doctrine and a fact of revelation, its extent must be largely determined by the same authority. What is the testimony of the inspired writers on the subject?

“Who gave himself a ransom for all.”<sup>1</sup>  
“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came

<sup>1</sup> 1 Timothy ii 6.

upon all men unto justification of life." "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "In thee shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." He is "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the son to be the Saviour of the world." John "came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. That was the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." "Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." "Who is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe." "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have



turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

In these passages which we have quoted from the Word of God, the inspired writers employ nearly every universal term in our language to set forth the atonement as a divine provision for the salvation of all men. The terms "men," "every man," "the world," "the whole world," "all the earth," show that there is no limitation in the extent of the atonement as the provision of infinite love for man's salvation. These terms teach universal salvation, or there are no words in human language that will teach it. According to this teaching all men — every creature of all nations, kindreds, tongues, and peoples — are embraced in this great salvation of God. The teaching of the Scriptures on the extent of the atonement shows this work to be in harmony with all the analogies of nature and life. All God's relations are universal. He is the universal creator, the universal preserver, the universal providence, the universal Father, the universal lawgiver and judge. It would be very strange if he were not the universal saviour. All his provisions for man are universal. The earth, the atmosphere, sunshine,

moisture, light, heat, electricity, and all the natural conditions of life are for all. It would be a violation of Nature's established order to put a limitation on atonement and circumscribe salvation; universal atonement is the natural and rational outcome of the nature, perfections, and relations of God. How could the infinite Father of all souls make a limited atonement? How could he provide a salvation that did not embrace all his children? How could infinite knowledge, wisdom, power, justice, and benevolence be exercised in, or satisfied with, making a limited and partial provision for man's moral and spiritual needs? Such a thing would be impossible to the nature of God. All the love of his infinite nature cries out against the monstrous conclusion. The idea is a libel upon his great goodness as revealed in all nature; a universal atonement is demanded by the nature and wants of man; all men are capable of salvation, and all men need salvation. There are in every man's nature rational, moral, and religious elements, which may be organized into a Christian life, and builded into a Christian character. These are the moral elements and religious emotions of our common humanity.

On them is grounded all morality and religion; they lay the foundation in humanity for the possibility, probability, certainty, and need of salvation. They form the anthropology of Universalism. In them we have the human bed-rock of all ethics, piety, and religion.

It is for this — the moral and religious side of humanity — the atonement has been provided. It is to these emotions and affections it makes its appeal; to them it brings light, love, joy, hope, and consolation. Here we have the provision in man's moral and religious constitution for universal salvation; here we have the want revealed, and also a promise of the supply to be provided. Salvation is human; it is a human want, a human hope, and a human experience. It becomes human life, human love, and human happiness; it is this part of man's nature that receives, applies, and is saved by the atonement.

Universal atonement provides for the full, free, and sincere offer of salvation to all men. If it were limited, made only for the benefit of the few, no such offer could be honestly made. As salvation on its divine side is grounded in the atonement, in its extent it cannot transcend

it. The offer of salvation should therefore be limited to those for whom the atonement is made. As the atonement is the means, and salvation the end, it is evident the end cannot be attained where the means do not operate. Universal salvation can only be offered sincerely on the ground of atonement for all; this involves the right to offer, and the duty to accept the offer of salvation. We have the right to offer salvation only to those for whom we know it has been provided, and how can we possibly know this unless it has been provided for all? If the provision is universal, we should make the offer universal; if it is not, we should make no offer at all, because we do not and cannot know to whom we should make it. We are not under obligation to accept an offer of salvation unless we know it was provided for us, and how can we know it was provided for us unless it was provided for all? If it was provided for all, we know it was provided for us, because we are part of all. Universal atonement and universal salvation, which is grounded on it and is practically a part of it, is the only theory of the work of Christ which can justify the ministry in making an offer of sal-

vation, or make it the duty of man to accept it. This is one of the practical aspects of Universalism which should be more frequently presented to the people in our pulpit ministrations.

## XII. — THE ATONEMENT AND MAN.

Man is a moral and religious being, endowed with moral and religious faculties, sustaining moral relations, and owing moral and religious duties; but for this fact, morality and religion, as forms of human activity and modes of human development, would be unknown. They are both in one sense practically human creations; they have grown out of man's nature and wants. It is this nature that gives to laws their authority, and to religious institutions their sacredness.

The moral and religious nature of man, which is the human basis of law and order and the foundation of Church and State, has recognized the great principle of atonement in practical, domestic, social, and business life, and also in the offering of religious sacrifices. The principle of atonement thus practically and religiously recognized is the great law of God's providence,—revealed alike in Nature, man,

and the Bible,—that we can suffer for the good of our fellow-men, and that they are blessed and saved by and through our suffering.

This principle of human action is universal in its application, and as old as human society; the fact is, society could not exist without it. It is the great law of love in domestic and social life; it is the law of benevolence between men and the law of heaven as revealed in the action of the Father and the Son in making atonement for man. This principle is the very essence of atonement. It is the law of life in all Nature, the law of love in all society, the law of sacrifice in all religion, and the law of reconciliation in all divinity.

As grounded alike in the nature of God and man, it is stronger than law and older than government. It is, in fact, the benevolent source and fountain of both. Under the existence of this law the atonement became possible, and by its application to God and man was made actual. It is sustained by the whole moral nature of man; human society is builded on it; benevolent institutions grow out of it; the Church has been created by it. Christian civilization is the tidal wave of its movement in the

world; and all human progress is but the evolution of its power as connected with the growth of institutions.

This law, though old as humanity, is always new. It is as much a part of social life to-day as it ever was. The demand for it now is as great as it was in the days of Christ. Man in contact with sin and sorrow always needs an atonement; the soul is ever crying out for reconciliation; mistakes, errors, and sins constantly need to be atoned for; to suffer with sinners and for sinners is as necessary now as at any period of the world's history. Love is still the divine influence which reconciles man to God and to his brother man. There are Gethsemanies and Calvaries now as of yore. Souls still cry out in agony, "If it be possible, let this cup pass." Saviors still throw themselves into the breach and die, that principles, country, or men may live. The great fact in history, and the great moral law in the nature of God and man by which it became a fact,—that is, man's salvation through atonement,—is the basal fact in Christianity, and the central fact in all history.

Not only the law but the fact of atonement

has also been woven into everything, — law, literature, music, painting, architecture, sculpture, and poetry. It gives life, color, and form to worship, and inspiration and motive to Christian effort. It is the foundation, and should be the life, of the Church. The living spiritual body of Christ has been builded and organized by it. These facts show that the atonement, in its principle, law, and fact, is adapted to man's nature, meets his moral necessities, is in harmony with his moral intuitions, and is sustained as a practical law of life by his conscience. It meets the requirements of moral government, sustains moral order, enforces moral law, and upholds the divine administration, at the same time that it provides for the salvation of man. It does this, not by a legal fiction, but by the action of a great moral force.

The action of this force is spiritually vital to the moral nature of man, the social organization called society, the spiritual life of the Church. The action of all organisms, whether vegetable, animal, moral, or spiritual, is vital and vicarious. We see this in the plant, the animal, the family, society, and the Church. Everywhere we see the parts, or members, of



organisms suffering with and for each other. This is the law of God, the law of Nature, the law of life, the law of society, and the law under which alone atonement became possible, and by the application of which it was made a fact.

This law is vital, benevolent, social, and organic. It builds molecules into organisms; it builds individuals into families, communities, and general society. It reconciles God to man, and men to each other. It is the law of conjugal union, domestic harmony, and family peace; it is the bond of brotherhood to the nations, prevents war, and preserves and insures peace. It brings man into union with God, and God into communion with man; it unites heaven and earth, and makes the universe the happy home of God, men, and angels.

### XIII. — THE ATONEMENT AND FAITH.

We as Christians live by faith, walk by faith, are justified by faith, and saved by faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace

wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." <sup>1</sup>

The Apostle shows in this passage that faith connects us with Christ and his atonement, through whom we are justified, reconciled, and have peace, joy, love, patience, experience, and hope. It is faith that establishes the vital union between the human soul and Christ; and all these spiritual blessings come to us as the results of this living and organic union with the Son of God. There can be no living union with God, man, and Christ, or man and man, without faith. Faith is the natural, necessary, and universal condition of such union. Wherever this union of souls exists, there we always find faith as its living bond.

We may have physical and mental contact with men without faith, but no vital union of two personal, spiritual natures. Two spiritual

<sup>1</sup> Romans v. 1-5.

natures cannot become morally united without confidence. This is the life of true friendship, and the social bond and business tie of the world. It is this bond of faith, this personal confidence, this supreme act of the soul's trust, that calls into united and harmonious action the intellect, emotions, and will, and is made of thought, feeling, and volition, that unites the soul of man vitally, morally, and spiritually with God and Christ. It is this faith that makes love possible and real between man and God; love would be impossible without it.

It is the function of atonement to create, or call into action, faith, as the bond of union between man and God. It does this by revealing to man God's great love for him. This knowledge awakens confidence, as emotion is born of thought. This is eternal or spiritual life,—to know God and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent. This life is the result of the union which faith establishes between man and God; and this faith is born of the atonement. Establish this organic union of the soul with God by faith, and the spiritual life of God flows into the human soul, and man knows by experience the power and sweetness of the life of God; this is

salvation. "For ye are saved by grace, through faith: that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Grace as revealed in the atonement is the cause, faith is the condition, man the subject, and God the benevolent giver of salvation. It is a divine gift, a gracious work, a human experience, a spiritual change, and a new life.

#### XIV.—THE ATONEMENT AND SALVATION.

Salvation is deliverance from some form of evil. If the ignorant man becomes educated, he is saved from ignorance; if the diseased man is healed, he is saved from disease; if the poor man becomes rich, he is saved from poverty. When the drunkard reforms, he is saved from drunkenness; when the sinner repents and reforms, he is saved from sin. Salvation is a personal change in man's nature, life, conduct, character, and experience; no one can be saved by proxy. The change must take place in his own thoughts, feelings, spirit, purposes, actions, life, and character. When a man becomes the subject of these changes, he is conscious of it; it is a matter of knowledge, it is a new experience. He begins to feel the throbbing of a new life, comes into new relations, really and prac-

tically. So to speak, he is born into a new world, forms new plans, is influenced by new motives, lives for higher and nobler ends; he is morally and spiritually alive. He has been raised from the death of sin and the grave of lust into a new spiritual and divine life. Old things have passed away, — all things have become new. In some sense he has new joys and sorrows, new pleasures and pains, new hopes and fears. He is saved from sin, — its pollution, power, slavery, remorse, shame, and fear.

Salvation is growth and development. Man grows from the animal to the spiritual, divine, and eternal life; he develops new affections, sympathies, and tastes. We grow out of the animal into the spiritual, and out of the earthly into the heavenly; we grow out of sin into holiness, out of hate into love, out of selfishness into benevolence, out of error into the truth, out of vice into virtue, out of doubt into confidence. Our natures, faculties, and powers all grow; the intellect, reason, conscience, heart, and will are all developed into new strength and purity.

We are commanded to grow in grace and in the knowledge and love of God. In spiritual de-

velopment we have babes in Christ, young men and women in the Lord, and fathers in the Church. Christian life is illustrated by the germ, the plant, the blade, the ear, and the perfected corn in the ear. We have the bud, the blossom, the young and afterward the matured fruit. Salvation is not an instantaneous, but a gradual work. We are not born perfect, but grow into perfection. Character is not created; it grows. Christian life is a process of development; we grow into moral strength and beauty. Salvation is enjoyment; an important part of it is happiness. Enjoyment does not result from the possession so much as from the exercise of our faculties. It is the use we make of them that brings enjoyment. Our developed and perfected powers in exercise will augment and increase our happiness. Man was made not only to be useful but to be happy; he was created for, and adapted to it. It naturally results from the use of his faculties and the exercise of his powers in a rational way. Such an exercise of the faculties with which God has endowed us is a Christian duty; and happiness comes from and in the discharge of duty.

That happiness is a part of salvation is

clearly taught by the inspired writers. Paul says that the spiritual kingdom established in the believer's heart consists "not in meat and drink, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Christ says: "I give unto you my joy, that your joy may be full." "We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." "By whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."<sup>1</sup> These testimonies to the joy of the Christian life show that happiness is an important element in salvation.

The atonement is distinctly connected with salvation as the divinely appointed means to this end. "His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." This statement shows that the salvation that Jesus shall bring is salvation from sin, and not from punishment. If punishment is adapted to restrain man from sin and to reform his life and character, it would not be well or benevolent to save him from it. As it is needful for man and exists for his good, it is best that he should endure it until he has been reformed.

<sup>1</sup> Romans v. 2.

Punishment and atonement are associated in the moral economy of the universe. They are conditions of, and essential to, its moral order. This is the lesson of history and experience. They are both rooted in the moral nature of God, and sustained by the moral nature of man; they are united in the divine plan of human salvation, as different means working to the same end,—just as death and life are both processes in building the human organism. Like hunger and food, thirst and drink, disease and remedy, in God's natural economy, they are united for man's good, and co-operate for man's salvation.

Punishment is the moral pain that prompts the soul to make an effort to free itself from sin; and the atonement imparts strength for this work by the mighty motives of divine love and human hope. These are the two vital elements of all moral and spiritual life; they are essential to the work of salvation.

Punishment is the pain caused by the great need of the soul to be saved from sin; and the atonement gives the grace by which the need is met and the demand satisfied, in the personal consciousness of God's forgiving and sanctifying love. Punishment is the pain of the soul's



hunger and thirst for the bread and water of life, which moves man to seek these forms of spiritual good; and they are found in the love, sympathy, and peace of God revealed in the atonement. In this way punishment, which is a suffering condition of the soul caused by sin, and the atonement, which manifests God's love for the sinner, are united in the work of salvation. The one prepares the way for the other, and shows man his great need of it. Punishment and salvation in God's moral economy and in man's experience are not legal; they are vital. They are not merely forms of law and decrees of courts, they are facts in the moral history of the soul's life and growth; they are a part of the soul itself. The relation of punishment and atonement to man is not a legal, but a vital relation. The function which they perform under God's government and in man's development is not legal, but morally and spiritually vital; they have to do with the highest forms of life known to the universe of God. The process of the soul's salvation is a vital process; it is a part of the soul's life. The experience of salvation is vital; it is an experience of moral, spiritual life; it is a part of our con-

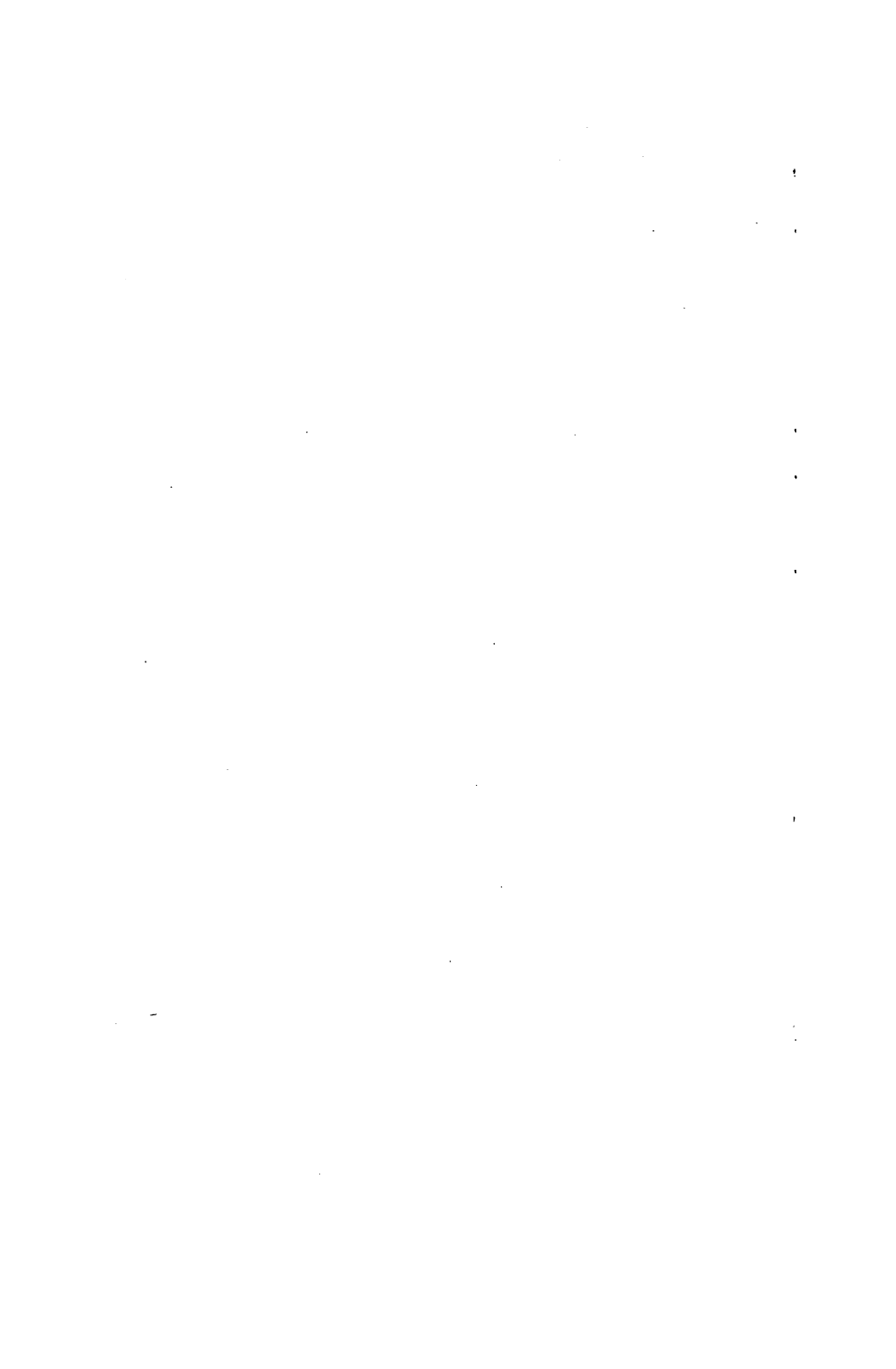
sciousness, and we know it as we know ourselves, and because we know ourselves.

The results of salvation are not legal, but vital; they do not change our legal relations to the law and the universe, but they affect only our vital relations. Before we are saved we are dead to the law, to God, to the moral universe. When we are saved we become morally and spiritually alive to everything. We have a consciousness of God, we feel his presence; the spirit of law has been taken into and become a part of our moral life. The moral forces of the universe warm us like sunshine, nourish us like food, vitalize us like the atmosphere; they enter into and become a part of our whole intellectual, moral, and spiritual being. In the exercise of the strength thus imparted, the soul throws off the slavery of sin, and becomes a free spiritual son of God. Appetite is restrained; passions are controlled, thoughts directed, affections governed, energies applied; and conscience is master in the empire of the soul.

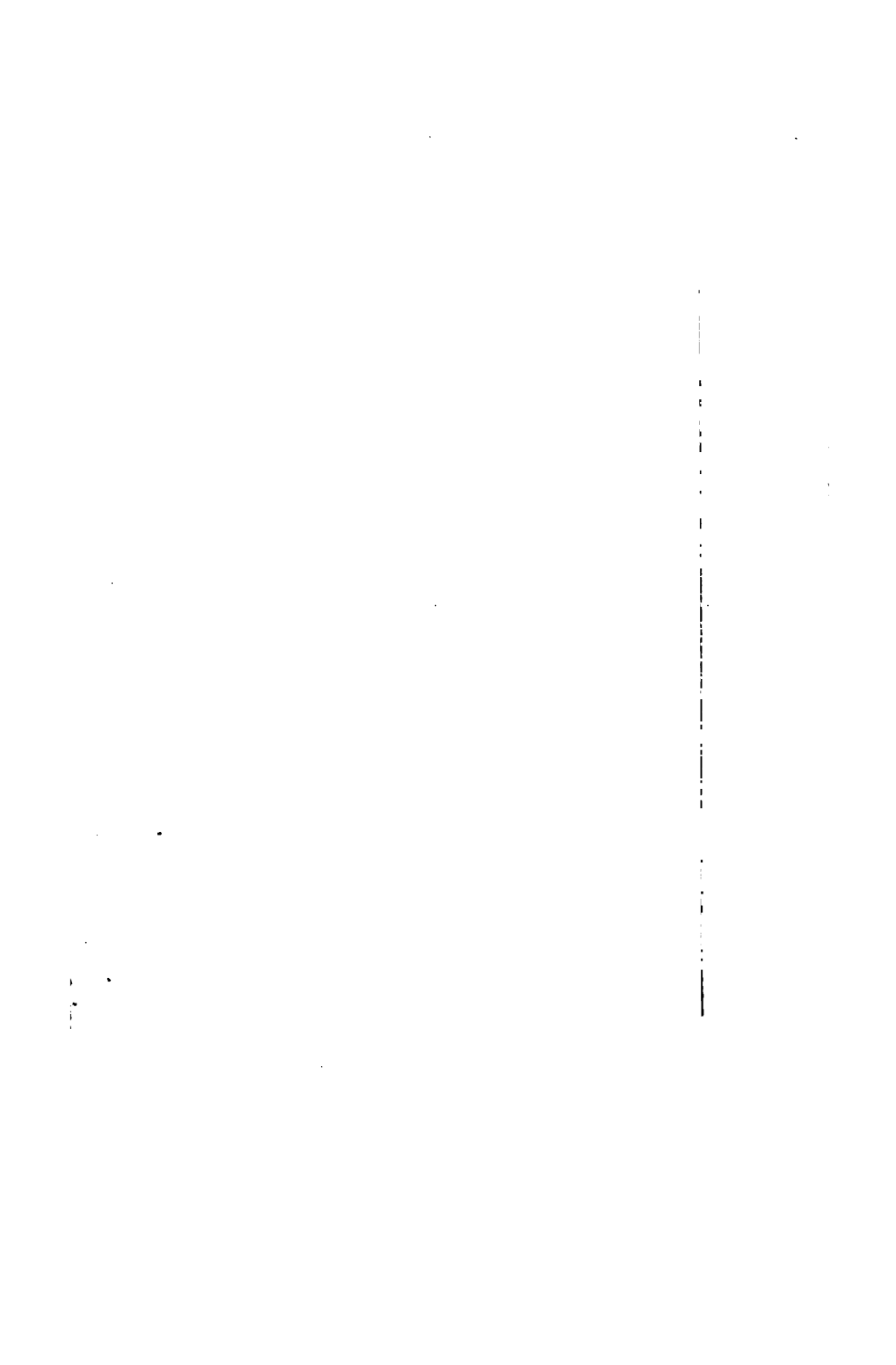
Under the stimulation and nourishment imparted by God, nature, and humanity, there is growth of man's spirit into all forms of grace,

✓ strength, and beauty. His moral life is many-sided; there is unity, symmetry, harmony, and variety in man's spiritual development. The result is that he develops a noble manhood, builds a strong character, and lives a beautiful and useful life. But the result of the possession of such a nature, the exercise of such faculties, the use of such powers, and the living of such a life, is much enjoyment. Such a man is a happy man; in such a life there must be much of brightness, sunshine, gladness, and joy. This is salvation,—the greatest vital fact and the grandest vital movement in all the universe.









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